

May 2011



Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Captain's Corner

by RACES Capt. Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer

Evacuating Your Home

OCRACES members have duty bags (go bags) prepared for deployment during emergency activations. (See the "Emergency Supplies List" at <http://www.ocraces.org/supplies.html>, to check the contents of your duty bags.) But what would you take with you if you had to evacuate your own home in an emergency, such as a hazardous spill or natural-gas line explosion in your neighborhood?

A potential natural-gas line explosion in Orange County is a major concern, considering what happened last year in San Bruno, near San Francisco. As reported in the September 20, 2010 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, archived at SFGate.com, a natural-gas line explosion ripped through a San Bruno neighborhood, sending up a geyser of fire that killed at least one person and injured more than 20 others, and igniting a blaze that destroyed 53 homes and damaged 120 more over a 10-acre area. The wind-whipped blaze leaped from structure to structure, raging unabated for almost an hour as emergency crews rushed in and residents streamed out. The central ball of fire, fed by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company gas line, raged past nightfall before abating. By then, houses on several blocks and thick stands of trees were engulfed in flames. Power was cut off to the area, and the only light came from emergency vehicles and the smoldering houses. Firefighting planes dumped retardant onto the blazes as neighbors desperately searched for help and for each other.

A huge crater was left in the street at the heart of the explosion. Sheriff's deputies and police began evacuating residents near the fireball within minutes, pounding on doors as the flames raged nearby. They went door to door, ordering people out of their homes as equipment was being set up mere feet away to battle the flames.

Another natural-gas incident was reported by Executive Editor Sandy Smith in the February 2011 issue of *EHS Today*, regarding the evacuation of Fairport Harbor, a village near Cleveland, Ohio. "The first call came into the local fire department around 6:45 AM: a home had exploded. City officials realized that something extraordinary was happening when another call came in, and another, all within minutes of each other and spreading throughout the city. Eventually, more than a dozen homes and an apartment building were on fire. Officials of the Lake County Emergency Management Agency soon realized that the fires were the result of gas leaks in basement furnaces. A number of furnace fires—many more than reported to the fire department—occurred, but quick-moving residents turned off the gas and put them out with home fire extinguishers. Since city and county officials didn't know the cause of the gas leaks, they called for a widespread evacuation of the town's 3,200 residents. Dominion East Ohio Gas confirmed that the gas lines in the homes, which normally carry a pressure of 6 ounces or so, suddenly over-pressurized to several pounds, causing them to spring leaks at connections and gaskets. Some 1,500

**The Next
OCRACES
Meeting is**

**May 2, 2011
1930 Hours**

**840 N. Eckhoff St.,
Suite 104, Orange**

Baker to Vegas Recap
City/County/MOU Drill
HT Simplex Drill



Orange County Sheriff's Department
Communications & Technology Division

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Captain's Corner *Continued from page 1*

homes will need to be inspected for damage to gas lines and gas appliances.”

Smith said that, after 9/11, the city of Cleveland instituted evacuation plans. “Everyone needs to be prepared to evacuate at a moment’s notice. If a firefighter knocked on my door and said, “Get out now,” what would I take, knowing that everything left behind could be lost? Humans, dogs, and medications are the first things into the car, followed by bank-account and insurance info, passports, and irreplaceable family photos from the Civil War era. Jewelry and important papers related to the house would be stuffed into the glove box, and the car trunk would have enough clothes for a week and a 40-pound bag of dog food. Any other nooks and crannies in the car would be filled with more recent family photos, quilts made by my grandmothers and great-grandmothers, and as much original artwork as the car could hold. Fortunately, other than running around to fill suitcases with clothes, everything else can be grabbed in under 5 minutes unless I panic.”

In RACES, we have planned our duty bags for relatively long deployments but probably not for evacuating our homes. (As mentioned in the first paragraph, click on “Emergency Supplies List” on the OCRACES Web site at

<http://www.ocraces.org> for a very comprehensive list of what should go into three well-equipped duty bags and a first-aid kit.) But what should we grab if we need to evacuate our own homes?

We are planning a future drill to include a scenario of a major natural-gas explosion. Aging natural-gas pipelines pass through heavily populated neighborhoods throughout Orange County—a major disaster ready to happen. It could be San Bruno all over again, to an even greater extent. RACES would certainly be activated, and we need to have our duty bags ready. But what about RACES members who live in affected neighborhoods? We could not count on them for deployment, but they need to count on themselves to be prepared to evacuate for several days. Some of the items in their duty bags would be vital during the evacuation, but many more items, such as listed above by Smith, need to be quickly located and thrown into their vehicles. What if you have only 10 minutes to grab some personal items and get out of your house? What would you take with you?

It’s time to supplement your duty-bag/first-aid kit lists with another list of what to grab in case of personal evacuation. Don’t forget your HT and chargers (mobile and AC)!

OCRACES Deploys to Baker to Vegas

Late Friday, April 15, 2011, a team of OCRACES members headed toward Baker, Pahrump, and Las Vegas to provide communications for OCS D running teams participating in the Baker to Las Vegas Challenge Cup Relay. RACES Lt. Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, oversaw the radio installations in Baker, and then moved to Las Vegas. Randy Benicky, N6PRL, put in long hours in the chase vehicle. The Pahrump communications command post was manned by RACES Sgt. Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, RACES Sgt. Jack Barth, AB6VC, Martin La Rocque, N6NTH, and Brian Turner, KI6WZS. Retired OCS D Emergency Communications Coordinator Walt Wilson, K7WWW, came down from Oregon and also participated.

Brian reported his first Baker to Vegas experience was great, and that he learned a lot about the inner workings of APRS and troubleshooting technical issues that came up during the event. He emphasized that we need to have more operators. “Each OCS D team should have an amateur radio in the chase vehicle, in the event APRS goes down. We then have a backup method of tracking the team.” Several years ago, more OCRACES members did participate in Baker to Vegas, and we were able to provide RACES operators in some chase vehicles. We also provided an extensive APRS backbone system throughout the course, which is no longer our responsibility. However, as Brian mentions, we need to have coordinated technical support for APRS. OCRACES was set up at 7:00 AM Saturday in Pahrump, but at approximately 10:30 AM, all APRS tracking was lost for almost 8 hours. “We need to have a team established that does nothing but keep the APRS system up and running,” according to Brian.



Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC (top photo), and Martin La Rocque, N6NTH, at Pahrump command post.

Next OCRACES Meeting: May 2nd

The next County of Orange RACES meeting is on Monday, May 2, 2011, at 7:30 PM, at 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, in Orange. At this meeting we will have a recap of the Baker to Vegas event, and will discuss our preparations for the next City/County RACES & MOU drill on May 21st, and Field Day on June 25th and 26th. Also at this meeting we will hold a short "HT drill," during which all members will need to program their HTs quickly to a particular simplex frequency and communicate with each other. Be sure that you are *very* familiar with how to program a frequency into your HT from its keypad. (Those of you with Motorola HTs are going to have a challenge!!!) The frequency will *not* be one of the designated OCRACES simplex frequencies, but will be a surprise, considering that we might be deployed to a city or MOU and use one of their frequencies during an emergency.

City/County RACES & MOU Drill: May 21st

The next City/County RACES & MOU Drill will be on Saturday, May 21, 2011, from 0900 to 1100 hours. The scenario for this exercise will be severe flooding throughout the County. This scenario is an extension of the Golden Guardian exercise occurring the previous Wednesday, May 18th (see article below). Any official messages we send during an EOC activation would be generated and approved by designated Emergency Management personnel in the EOC. In light of this, we are requesting the Emergency Manager or designee from each participating city or agency to prepare and/or approve several messages for their RACES/ACS or MOU personnel to send during the exercise. Considering the scenario for this exercise, please prepare messages that reflect the possible needs public safety might have, such as traffic gridlock, road closures, evacuations, rescue operations, shelter needs, potable water procurement, hospital damage, etc., plus any resources a city or MOU can offer such as care and shelter facilities or police/fire/public-works personnel and equipment. Having these messages already prepared will help expedite the flow of radio traffic during the two-hour exercise. The FEMA ICS 213 General Message Form should be utilized by all participants in this drill, and will help to ensure common radio traffic-passing techniques. The form may be downloaded from the OCRACES Web site at <http://www.ocraces.org>. When generating messages to be handled by the Hospital Disaster Support Communications System, be sure to address those messages to particular hospitals, rather than to HSDSCS itself.

The exercise will consist of a general message blitz, a simplex relay, and ATV/SSTV. The simplex relay was used for the first time in last October's exercise, and generated considerable interest in incorporating it in future exercises. OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, will e-mail additional details to all OCRACES members and City RACES and MOU officers and coordinators.

Golden Guardian Exercise: May 18th

OCSD Emergency Management will participate in the Golden Guardian exercise and would like to have an OCRACES member at Loma Ridge on Wednesday, May 18, 2011. Only one member is needed, but more could be included if interested. One of the functions would likely be to conduct a roll call of the cities on the OA-1 radio. The exercise is scheduled from 0800 to 1200 hours. Contact OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, if you are available.

Field Day: June 25th-26th

County of Orange RACES will participate in Field Day on June 25-26, 2011 at Craig Regional Park in Fullerton. We will deploy our emergency communications response vehicle, and Field Day Chairman Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, will bring his communications trailer. Besides practicing for field deployment during emergencies, using ICS procedures, we want to have more of a contest operation this year, with efficient point-gathering HF stations. We need to make use of our Cushcraft A-3S three-element triband beam that was donated to OCRACES by Jim Carter, WB6HAG. Using this antenna should reduce the interference between our HF stations. City RACES units are invited to participate with us, and to bring their equipment, trailers, etc. We will again plan to have a Field Day potluck late Saturday afternoon, June 25th.

FCC Forum on Earthquake Communications

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) of the Federal Communications Commission will host an Earthquake Communications Preparedness Forum on May 3, 2011, at FCC Headquarters in Washington, DC. Audio/video coverage of the meeting will be broadcast live with open captioning over the Internet from the FCC's Web page at <http://www.fcc.gov/live>. Local time for this forum is 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM, PDT.

Catastrophic natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes are large-scale emergencies that may affect substantial portions of the public and can have a significant impact on critical national infrastructure, including communications networks and services. This Forum will consider the preparations that should be made in advance of an earthquake and how to develop and implement national communications policies and emergency procedures to respond to an earthquake's potential impact on communications networks and services. This Forum will highlight those practices that best prepare the public and the communications sector for a catastrophic earthquake.

Panel 1 will discuss what can be expected from a large-scale earthquake and preparations to respond to an event of this nature. Panel 2 will explore the national policies, provider services, and response capabilities that ensure first responders and the public have access to essential communications services in the wake of large-scale disasters. This panel will discuss how national communications policies and emergency procedures should be developed and/or implemented to respond to the potential impact of a disaster on the national infrastructure. This will include discussion of considerations for the use of Federal assets and the ability of individual sectors within the communications industry to recover from large-scale damage and loss of facilities. In addition, FCC subject-matter experts will discuss their observations of Japan's response to its historic earthquake as it relates to emergency communications.

ARRL Claims Partial ReConRobotics Victory

In an Order on Reconsideration released on April 15, 2011, the FCC granted the ARRL's request for changes in the labeling and instruction manual requirements to ensure that users of the Recon Scout (a remote-controlled, maneuverable surveillance robot operating in the 430-448 MHz band) are aware of its limitations, with regard to interference. The device is marketed to public-safety agencies and certain security personnel by ReConRobotics Inc. Noting that no applications for individual licenses to operate the Recon Scout had been granted, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, and the Office of Engineering and Technology deferred to the Commission's Enforcement Bureau with regard to complaints that ReConRobotics has been marketing uncertified devices and that the devices have been operating without authorization.

The FCC Order also acknowledged that the ARRL was correct in arguing that the waiver was insufficient in that it did not waive applicable provisions of Section 2.106 of the Commission's Rules, which contain the Table of Allocations of frequency bands to the various radio services. The Commission's solution was to "...retroactively waive the Table of Allocations to the extent necessary to permit use of the Recon Scout."

ReConRobotics did not object to the changes in labeling and instruction-manual language sought by the ARRL. Recon Scout transmitters delivered after April 15, 2011, must carry the following label: "This device may not interfere with federal or non-federal stations operating in the 420-450 MHz band and must accept any interference received." The instruction manual must also include the following: "Although this transmitter has been approved by the Federal Communications Commission, it must accept any interference received from federal or non-federal stations, including interference that may cause undesired operation." The 430-448 MHz band is allocated to the amateur service on a secondary basis and to federal users in the radiolocation service on a primary basis; non-federal radiolocation stations are secondary to both federal radiolocation stations and amateur stations.

In other respects the ARRL Petition for Reconsideration was denied, as were petitions filed by individuals. While the FCC agreed that "there were possible inconsistencies between particular readings in the test data" submitted by ReconRobotics, the Commission found that the data "nonetheless demonstrated the particular suitability of the 420-450 MHz band" relative to higher-frequency bands. With regard to concerns that the devices will incur interference from amateur operations, the Commission continues to adhere to the view that "the possibility of the device incurring interference in some instances did not present a compelling reason to prohibit its use in all instances.... ReconRobotics has accepted that it may receive interference from amateur operations, and the Order specifies that the Recon Scout must accept interference from licensed users."

Watching the Web

Web Sites of Interest to RACES Personnel

48 Years Old and Still a Flamethrower

<http://radioworld.com/article/119514>



This <http://radioworld.com/article/119514> link is a page on the *Radio World* Web site featuring an article and photo tour of the Voice of America (VOA)—the largest radio transmission facility in the United States. The photos are amazing, and we urge all readers of NetControl to point their browsers to this fascinating Web page. The following copy is from that article.

While the International Broadcasting Bureau, which oversees VOA operations, has closed a number of its domestic and overseas transmitting facilities (relay stations) and moved into placement of programming on AM and FM outlets in countries where a VOA presence is desired, it still provides thousands of hours of programming for shortwave listeners every month.

At one time the government's domestic HF broadcasting activities involved several large shortwave transmitting plants located in Ohio, California, and North Carolina. Today, only one remains; it's located amid Carolina farm land and forests just a few miles from downtown Greenville. It's officially known as the Edward R. Murrow Transmitting Station and actively beams out programming in the international broadcasting spectrum on a daily basis.

Whether it will remain active much longer is in question. As part of its 2011 budget submission, the Broadcasting Board of Governors proposed closing the last U.S.-based shortwave broadcasting center at an estimated cost savings of \$3 million per year.

When the station first took to the air in February 1963, it was one of three VOA facilities constructed here. The sites were designated "A," "B," and "C," and ringed Greenville, forming a triangle with its vertices roughly 20 miles apart. In its heyday, the Greenville operation was the largest broadcasting site in the world.

Site C served as the operation's "receive" site and was linked to the VOA's Washington studios by both a dedicated interstate microwave system and AT&T Long Lines service. It distributed programming to transmitters located at the "A" and "B" sites, and also served as an administrative center. Equipment installed at "C" included a large number of HF antennas and diversity receivers for reception and relay of shortwave broadcasts from anywhere in the world.

That facility was closed and dismantled in the mid-1990s, with a consolidation of operations to the "A" and "B" transmission sites.

Site A was deactivated several years ago and placed in "mothball" status, leaving Site B as the only operational Greenville VOA facility.

Although its operations have been scaled back from the "glory days" of 40 or so years ago and its future has been put in question, Site B still ranks as the largest radio transmission plant in this country and, at least for now, remains an active and impressive radio broadcasting facility.



The transmitter building at Greenville Site B houses eight very large transmitters; all typically operate at 250 kW and two can provide 500 kW of HF energy if required. There's also a 50-kW unit kept for backup and testing purposes. It was most recently used for evaluating DRM performance in the HF bands.

RACES/MOU News from Around the County

"RACES/MOU News" provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County RACES/ACS units and MOU organizations in Orange County.

Please send your news to NetControl Editor Ken Bourne, W6HK, at: w6hk@ocraces.org

[American Red Cross Orange County Chapter](#)

The "MayDay 2011" event sponsored by the Orange County Red Cross Communications function, and scheduled for May 14, 2011, has been canceled, due to a late start in getting organized for this event and not enough time to gather the resources and advertise this event.

[Hospital Disaster Support Communications System \(HDSCS\)](#)

At 10:28 AM on April 5, 2011, eight HDSCS leaders received a group page with the code number for Saddleback Hospital in Laguna Hills. Attempts to call the hospital were met with "all circuits busy" recordings. An on-air net formed immediately on two HDSCS repeaters with Joe Moell, KØOV, at first and later Cheryl Simpson, KD6MWZ, and April Moell, WA6OPS, as Net Controls. Ken Simpson, W6KOS, set out for the hospital and KØOV phoned others who live or work nearby to activate them. W6KOS arrived at 11:03 AM with others close behind. The hospital could not receive calls from the public and outgoing calls were partially disrupted, too. Unit-to-unit phone connections were functional but there was concern that they might fail also. HDSCS operators provided a backup to the hospital-to-community phones with Net Control's home phone number given to Orange County Communications for incoming calls as needed. Repair work by the phone provider, both on- and off-premises, continued throughout the day and the network continued also with three HDSCS relief operators arriving in the afternoon. Shortly after 5:30 PM, it was determined that the phone system had been sufficiently restored and Amateur Radio communications were no longer needed. HDSCS operators secured and left at 6 PM. In addition to W6KOS, the HDSCS members responding to the hospital were (in alphabetical order) Tom Hall, N6DGG, Scott Lolmaugh, WD8ICK, Jim

McLaughlin, AB6UF, Pete Martinez, K2PTM, Dave Popko, AF6TN, John Walker, AC7GK, and Dave West KI6EPI.

HDSCS members John and Corky Walker, AC7GK and KG6YWY, were on hand at 5:00 AM on Thursday, April 21, 2011, as Saddleback Hospital in San Clemente performed a cutover of upgrades to its telephone system. Using their own radio gear and the hospital's outside VHF/UHF antenna, they were in contact with base stations operated by April Moell, WA6OPS, and Jim McLaughlin, AB6UF, ready in case the phone system failed and messages had to be relayed into and out of the hospital. The cutover went smoothly and the system was declared operational and stable just before 7:00 AM.

[Orange County Amateur Radio Club \(OCARC\)](#)

John Freichs, N6VCW, and William Phinzy, K6WHP, will talk on the mission of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) at the next OCARC meeting on Friday, May 20, 2011, at 1900 hours, at the American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive (west door), in Santa Ana.

[South Orange Amateur Radio Association \(SOARA\)](#)

The Spring Auction will be held at the next SOARA meeting on Monday, May 16, 2011, at 1900 hours, at the Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center, 24932 Veterans Way, in Mission Viejo.

[County of Orange RACES](#)

Congratulations to OCRACES Member Ray Grimes, N8RG, who was promoted to OCSA Reserve Captain on April 1, 2011, and has taken over the leadership of the Aero Squadron. Ray is also one of the Founders and Co-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sheriff's Museum & Education Center.

May 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 <i>OCRACES Meeting & Weekly ACS Net</i>	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 <i>Weekly ACS Net</i>	10	11	12	13	14 <i>EmComm Breakfast</i>
15	16 <i>Weekly ACS Net</i>	17	18 <i>Golden Guardian Exercise</i>	19	20	21 <i>City/County RACES & MOU Drill</i>
22	23 <i>Weekly ACS Net & SWACS Radio Test</i>	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 <i>Weekly ACS Net</i>	31				

Upcoming Events:

- **May 2:** OCRACES Meeting, 1930, 840 N. Eckhoff St., Suite 104, Orange
- **May 14:** EmComm Breakfast, 0800, Katella Grill, 1325 W. Katella Ave., Orange
- **May 18:** Golden Guardian Exercise, 0800-1200, OC EOC, Loma Ridge
- **May 21:** City/County RACES & MOU Drill, 0900-1100
- **May 23:** Southwest ACS Frequency/Radio Test
- **Jun 25-26:** Field Day
- **Jun 27:** City/County RACES & MOU Meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff St., Suite 104, Orange
- **Sep 9-11:** HAMCON 2011, Marriott Torrance South Bay



www.ocraces.org



Mission Statement

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

- 10 m: 29.640 MHz output, 29.540 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (disabled)
 - 6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL (disabled)
 - 2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
 - 2 m: 147.480 MHz simplex
 - 1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL
 - 70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
 - 70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
 - 70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
 - 23 cm: 1282.025 MHz output, 1270.025 MHz input, 88.5 Hz PL
- *Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

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Questions or Comments?
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**“W6ACS ...
Serving
Orange County”**

Meet your County of Orange RACES Members!



Ken Bourne
W6HK



Scott Byington
KC6MMF



Harvey Packard
KM6BV



Ralph Sbragia
W6CSP



Marten Miller
KF6ZLQ



Robert Stoffel
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Jack Barth
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Jim Carter
WB6HAG



Chuck Dolan
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Ernest Fierheller
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Bill Borg
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Ray Grimes
N8RG



Walter Kroy
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